

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

From: Lotthammer, Shannon (MPCA)
Sent: Thur 3/27/2014 1:54:05 PM
Subject: RE: Announcement of Wild Rice Sulfate Standard Study and Analysis Scientific Peer Review, and Request for Reviewer Nominations
[wq-s6-42y.pdf](#)

Hi all –

Bob and Sara, thank you for your questions about the scientific peer review process. I completely agree with you that the scientific peer reviewers need to be impartial, and should be selected based on their relevant scientific expertise and be free of any real or perceived conflict of interest. This is part of the reason why we have hired a contractor (ERG) to facilitate this process. ERG will conduct the peer reviewer selection process. ERG has 30 years of experience in conducting scientific peer review processes, including the selection of impartial peer reviewers.

The nomination announcement (attached again here for reference) identifies the

scientific/engineering expertise that we are looking for in the peer reviewers (for more details, please see the section titled “What types of expertise will nominees need to possess” in the attached announcement). ERG will thoroughly screen all nominees that are identified through ERG’s search for experts and via the public nomination process. The screening process will include ERG’s review of each candidate’s expertise against the expertise criteria identified, to evaluate their qualifications for this peer review. ERG will also have each nominee complete a detailed conflict-of-interest form, which ERG will also carefully review. MPCA will also have the opportunity to identify any potential conflicts of interest we are aware of in the candidate pool. From among the candidates who most strongly meet the scientific selection criteria, ERG will select a final set of reviewers.

The goal of the reviewer selection process is for ERG to identify a final set of reviewers who, collectively, best cover the multiple scientific expertise areas we are looking for, have no conflict of interest, and, to the extent feasible, provide a balance of perspectives. It is not our intent to have interest groups represented on the scientific peer review group. Interested parties will have the opportunity to attend the scientific peer review meeting this summer and address the reviewers about the scientific questions under discussion.

I hope this helps answer your questions about how we will address the need for an impartial peer review group. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to let me know.

Thanks again!

Shannon

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

Subject: RE: Announcement of Wild Rice Sulfate Standard Study and Analysis Scientific Peer Review, and Request for Reviewer Nominations

Shannon,

I agree with everything Bob Shimek has stated. As you also know, I have asked similar questions of MPCA staff.

Sara Barsel

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 6:12 PM

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

Subject: RE: Announcement of Wild Rice Sulfate Standard Study and Analysis Scientific Peer Review, and Request for Reviewer Nominations

Shannon,

I am making inquiry about process and protocol for selecting the peer review group and who is in and who is out. We know the CoC has publicly stated they will be represented on the review committee. I have deep concerns about that and the ability of the committee to be impartial in their review process. As is well known, the Chamber of Commerce has tried lawsuits, legislation, lobbying to have their way with sulfate discharges from the mines and elsewhere. They are strict and outspoken opponents of the existing standard or any other standard that will clean up the waters of MN from this harmful discharge.

With their stated intent, my question is why would we let them, or their hired representatives onto the review committee? The taxpayers of MN just spent allot of money on this project. I think we should do everything we can to make sure the taxpayers get a fair and unbiased review of this project.

Who vets and chooses applicants and what protocol does MPCA have in place to ensure impartiality?

Bob Shimek

From: shannon.lotthammer@state.mn.us

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

Subject: RE: Announcement of Wild Rice Sulfate Standard Study and Analysis Scientific Peer Review, and Request for Reviewer Nominations

Date: Wed, 26 Mar 2014 20:53:50 +0000

Hi all –

I'm afraid we discovered a typo in the request for reviewer nominations document (ERG's phone # was incorrect). Attached is the corrected version, which has also been updated on our web site.

My apologies for the multiple e-mails!

Shannon

From: Lotthammer, Shannon (MPCA)
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 4:32 PM

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

Subject: Announcement of Wild Rice Sulfate Standard Study and Analysis Scientific Peer Review, and Request for Reviewer Nominations

Hi everyone –

Happy Spring! (Yes, that is meant to be sarcastic). I do hope you are all having a good start to spring, and I trust that warmer weather is just around the corner. In the meantime, I'm pleased to let you all know that we have wrapped up our RFP process for the scientific peer review of the Wild Rice Standard Study and Analysis. MPCA has contracted with Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG) to convene and facilitate the scientific peer review. As you know, the peer review is the next step in the larger process in which MPCA will consider scientific information to determine if changes to the wild rice sulfate standard are needed. For those of you interested in more information about ERG, please see the summary and web site link below.

We are targeting summer 2014 (likely late June) for the peer-review meeting to be held in the Twin Cities. ERG will be coordinating the peer review process, including the nominations of reviewers. Please see the attached "Scientific Peer Review Meeting Purpose and Process" announcement for more information about the peer review itself. Also attached is a "Request for Nominations for Scientific/Technical Experts for Peer Review," which provides details about how you can nominate scientists/engineers for the peer review; nominations will be accepted by ERG until April 15th. Both of the attached documents can also be found on the MPCA's new web page for the scientific peer review: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/kppq38rq>.

Pat and I are also starting to plan for the next Advisory Committee meeting, which we hope to get scheduled for some time during the first half of April. Please look for a Doodle poll on potential dates soon. At our next meeting, we'll be soliciting your feedback and questions on the MPCA's Preliminary Analysis of the Wild Rice Sulfate Study.

That's it for now. Please let me know if you have any questions about the scientific peer review process (or the Wild Rice Sulfate Standard Study and Preliminary Analysis) – we welcome your feedback. And please be sure to check out the request for nominations for scientific peer reviewers.

Many thanks!

Shannon

More about ERG (ERG's website: <http://www.erg.com/services/peer-review.html>)

ERG is a highly experienced government peer review contractor. Continuously since 1984, ERG has organized hundreds of meeting, letter, and teleconference peer reviews of health and environmental documents under a wide variety of prime peer review contracts with government agencies, including the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency. These have ranged from simple letter reviews to peer review meetings of great interest to stakeholders and the public. ERG currently provides peer review services to EPA under two prime contracts — with EPA's National Center for Environmental Assessment and EPA's Office of Water. They have also recently begun a 5-year contract to organize peer reviews for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

For each peer review over the past 30 years, ERG has managed all stages, including identifying and recruiting nationally recognized experts in a wide variety of

environmental and health fields; managing reviewer nomination processes; screening, selecting, securing, and compensating qualified panel members who have no conflicts of interest; supporting charge development; organizing and facilitating panel teleconferences and meetings; and preparing summary reports of reviewer discussions on the charge questions.